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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 000599

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TAGS: [OVIP](#) [NEGROPONTE](#) [JOHN](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PINR](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#)
AU-1, SU
SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BASHIR

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Classified By: CDA C. HUME, REASON: SECTION 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: On April 15 Deputy Secretary Negroponte met with Sudanese President Omar El Bashir for over an hour. Negroponte emphasized USG concern over Darfur, including the fragility of the humanitarian situation, the need to transition to a UN/AU hybrid peace-keeping operation, and the challenge of restarting a political dialogue. Bashir concentrated on two points: the UN role in peace-keeping should be limited to providing financing, logistic support, and technical advice to the AU; and, while he would like to improve relations with the United States, he was skeptical that the USG would ever move in that direction. End Summary.

¶2. (C) President Bashir welcomed the Deputy Secretary and his delegation with the hope this meeting would have a more positive outcome than previous meetings with American visitors. Deputy Secretary Negroponte said he was on his first trip to Sudan. He had visited Juba and met First Vice President Salva Kiir; then he had gone to Darfur and met with the AMIS Force Commander, leaders of an IDP camp, and North Darfur Governor Kibbir. He appreciated the welcome extended to him by Sudanese hosts.

¶3. (C) Bashir said he wanted the visit to be positive and to create real understanding as a basis for improved relations. He sought positive cooperation to solve the problem of Darfur by peaceful means. With the positive cooperation extended by Senator Danforth and former Deputy Secretary Zoellick, Sudan had achieved the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). The DPA could have led to peace, but rather than supporting the DPA, AMIS, and the role of the AU, action had been shifted to insistence that international forces replace the AU and to support for the parties who had refused to sign the DPA. These actions had hurt the prospects for peace. Now the March 28 agreement between Sudan, the UN, and the AU on the UN's Heavy Support Package for the AMIS could relaunch the peace process.

¶4. (C) Deputy Secretary Negroponte said he had met with several of Bashir's top advisers to explain the USG position in detail, so he would now concentrate on a few main points. The DPA addressed humanitarian, security, and political issues, all of which now faced some serious issues of implementation. The humanitarian situation had for now stabilized, but security and political problems endangered that fragile stability. The AMIS Force Commander said the situation was "unpredictable" and "unstable." The United States hoped that the March 28 humanitarian agreement would be implemented as agreed, and the USG would monitor this situation.

15. (C) Negroponte said security required moving to the hybrid African Union and United Nations force. The USG supported a hybrid force, with an African commander in a single chain of command who would take orders from a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) appointed jointly by the UN and the AU. His/her appointment should come as soon as possible so that additional forces could be deployed. The USG concurred that the large majority of this force would be African, and the size of the force should be determined by the UN/AU joint assessment. If African governments could not supply all the troops required, the force should include troops from elsewhere. Because the 5,000 troops of the AMIS were too few, more forces were needed.

16. (C) Bashir said the first action needed was UN financing for the African troops. He had agreed to the Heavy Support Package; now the UN had to provide financing; and, next, African governments should be asked to provide forces. The two million soldiers in Africa were more than enough, if the financing were available. The ball was now in the UN's court.

17. (C) Negroponte said that, according to the UN/AU report, first recourse would be to African troops, but international forces could make an important contribution. Organization of the force had to be consistent with UN practices and standards. The United Nations was not just a bank. It had valuable experience and success in organizing peace-keeping missions in Africa, and issues relating to the hybrid force had to be discussed in an urgent way, such as during the meeting between AU Chairman Konare and UN SYG Ban on April 16 in New York.

18. (C) Bashir said the UN could finance the African troops under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which provided for entrusting the operation to a regional organization. In that way the UN could arrange the financing. The forces would be African; the UN could provide financing, technical advice, and logistic support. With agreement on the Heavy Support Package, the UN could now provide financing. Negroponte

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cautioned that it was important to know the outcome of the current conversations at the UN. Darfur needed additional security forces, and the Force Commander needed international forces to help him.

19. (C) Bashir said the African forces under African command would need only international support. Changing an AU green beret for a UN blue beret would do nothing. They needed only financing, technical advice and logistic support. The UN should provide the financing, then troops should be raised in Africa. If troops were not available, only then should one look into the possibility of international troops. There could be international support elements for the AU forces, with a unified command. Bashir insisted that the hybrid operation be based on African forces, supported by the UN.

110. (C) Negroponte said that the SRSG, appointed jointly by the UN and AU, would give the instructions to the force commander, providing the single chain of command. Bashir said he had no disagreement on the appointment of the SRSG, or the terms of reference, or the mandate. But the force commander had to be an African and the forces on the ground had to be African. The UN could provide financing, technical advice, and logistic support, the kind of arrangement contained in the Heavy Support Package. Negroponte hoped Bashir was not raising new problems that would hinder the launch of the hybrid force. Action was needed soon to raise forces, and for this UN procedures and standards had to be applied. Bashir said it was up to the UN to raise the forces.

111. (C) Negroponte addressed another security issue, the obligation of the Sudanese government to disarm the Janjaweed, who could not operate without the active support of the Sudanese government. Bashir replied that in Darfur some people in small groups were acting as criminals and bandits, but the government did not support them. None of these groups had ever asserted that they received government support. The major criminal activities were conducted by the parties who rejected the DPA. Those groups operated out of

camps in Chad, where they got military support and recruited among the refugees.

¶12. (C) Bashir said that Libya, Eritrea, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim were trying to restart peace talks. However, the rebels refused to negotiate because they were waiting for the United States to impose new sanctions against the government. The government wanted peace in Darfur, but the U.S. rush to sanctions had the consequence that the rebels would not now negotiate. As long as the U.S. and UK were threatening sanctions in the UN, the rebels did not want peace. Ending these threats would put pressure on the rebel position.

¶13. (C) Negroponte warned all parties to speed up implementation of the DPA. Peace efforts by Eliasson, Salim and Salva Kiir could all help restore security to Darfur. If the government went ahead to fund the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA) at \$300 million this year, people in Darfur would see a benefit of peace, and that step could improve the political situation. Bashir said the government had acted to stand up the TDRA, to fill all of the senior positions, to provide it with a headquarters, and to provide funding. Tenders had been advertised for initial projects. The funding would be provided throughout the year.

¶14. (C) Negroponte explained that most USG assistance had been for humanitarian purposes, given the conditions in Darfur, but it would prefer to support development projects. Bashir welcomed that preference, asserting that if the same amount of money were spend on development, there would be peace in Darfur. Before the war Darfur did not need humanitarian assistance, and USAID had carried out development projects. Negroponte said he was pleased to hear Bashir,s vision of a peaceful Darfur, but without security it would be difficult to return to that path.

¶15. (C) Bashir insisted that not all of Darfur was insecure. 80 percent of Darfur was safe, including areas such as Jebel Marra, which had not been affected by the war. Such areas were secure and returning to normal. The new governor of West Darfur, who had been a rebel, had taken effective measures to improve security.

¶16. (C) Shifting to a new topic, the Deputy Secretary said he had just visited the construction site for the new U.S. embassy. The USG was investing there \$110 million, a vision of a different future for bilateral relations. However, now the relationship was in difficulty. Presidential Adviser Nafie had told Negroponte that, even if the Darfur crisis were resolved, the USG would find some other reason not to improve relations. Negroponte had explained that the USG has good relations with most countries and was not seeking excuses to have bad relations. The USG could envisage a

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different future if the Darfur crisis were solved.

¶17. (C) Bashir appreciated this statement, but he charged that the Darfur crisis was "one hundred percent caused by USAID." At the start there were a few tribal problems, but then John Garang interfered with the help of USAID and Roger Winter. Sudanese officials remembered and wondered what the United States might do again. Bashir said many thought peace with the south was impossible, but Vice President Taha persevered with Senator Danforth. That success should have impelled the bilateral relationship forward. Danforth had promised that peace with the South would bring normal relations, no sanctions, and a waiver for debt. Deputy Secretary Zoellick promised the same for signing the Darfur

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Peace Agreement. Sudan signed, but then the USG shifted the goal posts by insisting that the UN replace the AU in Darfur.

¶18. (C) Bashir said he had agreed to the Heavy Support Package. The next step was up to the United States. He hoped events would prove Nafie,s pessimistic view wrong. Turning to the construction of the new embassy, Bashir said that some people in the government thought welcomed this step. However, many opposed the construction because they saw the policies of the USG to be to oppose the government

and to change the regime. After much experience, such was the view in Khartoum. As Bashir had stated previously, although President Bush cared about peace in Sudan, others in his administration worked against Sudan. Negroponte responded that the embassy was being built for normal diplomatic purposes and that USG policy was well-considered.

¶19. (C) Bashir said his government cared about its relations with the United States and wanted to solve its problems. The two sides had worked together to achieve the CPA and DPA, but bilateral relations had not improved. Negroponte reminded him that agreements must be implemented. If rapid progress were not made on implementing the DPA, bilateral relations would not move forward. The way forward would have to be built brick by brick, and the crucial point was to make progress in Darfur.

¶20. (C) In conclusion Bashir repeated that his government had signed the DPA, but then the USG insisted that responsibility for implementing it be shifted from the AU to the UN. The DPA provided otherwise. Why had the debate been shifted to the issue of rehatting peace-keeping forces? Sudan wanted the agreement implemented as signed. Zoellick had said that those parties who did not sign the DPA would be punished, but they were not. Sudan would like to turn a new page and cooperate with the USG. Despite sanctions on Sudan, permission was given to build the new embassy. Sudan was a poor country, and the United States was rich.

¶21. (U) Participants:

U.S.

The Deputy Secretary

Jendayi E. Frazer, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs

Cameron Hume, Charge d, Affaires

Bobby Pittman, Senior Director for Africa, National Security Council

Colonel Dennis Giddens, DoD advisor

Gustavo Delgado, D staff

Government of Sudan:

President Omar El Bashir

Lam Akol, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ambassador Abdel Basit Badawi Al Sanousi, Director of America Affairs, MFA

Abdulrahman Sharfie, Minister Plenipotentiary

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